**Tonbridge Archdeaconry**

It is with great delight that I commend this parish profile for the parish of St Mary’s Hadlow to you as you discern God’s call whether to serve here as Vicar.

You will see from the profile that this is a parish with a long history of effective Christian presence, and today offers a vibrant and thriving worshipping community in a setting that is rich in history as well as having opportunity for growth into the future.

This church finds itself in a vacancy at a time when parishes and congregations are navigating their way out of a very unsettled two years following the pandemic. Whilst this presents its own set of challenges, it is also an exciting time for churches to embrace the new opportunities that this season offers. The congregation and people of the benefice are keen to be able to give their new Vicar the support that will be needed into the coming months and years.

As Vicar you would also have the support of Deanery colleagues within the Paddock Wood Deanery, one of six that lie within the Tonbridge Archdeaconry. The Archdeaconry is one of three within the wider Diocese of Rochester.

The Diocese as a whole is home to some 1.3m people, which is set for significant growth (of around a further 300,000 over the next 20 years) – including areas that will impact this benefice. Whilst growth is inevitable, much of Tonbridge Archdeaconry retains its rural identity, with urban centres found in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, and Paddock Wood, and around the Aylesford area. For this benefice many look to Maidstone, in neighbouring Canterbury Diocese.

Tonbridge Archdeaconry shares its life together under the canopy of the Diocesan strategy, Called Together, which focusses upon 5 priorities, based upon the five marks of mission:

* *To enable each church to be mission minded*
* *To help children, young people and adults live out everyday faith in Jesus*
* *To support loving service in local communities*
* *To speak and respond to the prophetic voice of justice and peace*
* *To protect creation’s life for future generations*

I am committed to these priorities. Together, across the Archdeaconry, and indeed across the Diocese, we are working to realise these priorities within the many different contexts God has placed us. In this parish profile you will see how St Mary’s Hadlow is responding to the wider Called Together strategy.

With prayers for you as you discern God’s call to this place.

**Ven Sharon Copestake**

**Archdeacon of Tonbridge**

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